

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claim 15 is canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 1, 6, 9, 12, 16, 18, and 129 are amended. Consequently, claims 1-14 and 16-132 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 6, 9, 18, 59, and 81 being independent claims. Of those pending claims, claims 59-128 have been allowed.

Applicant takes this opportunity to thank the Examiner for allowing claims 59-128 and for indicating that claims 6-11 and 15-20 contain allowable subject matter. In light of the indication of allowability, Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 15, thereby placing claim 1, and its dependent claims, in condition for allowance. In addition, Applicant has rewritten dependent claims 6, 9, and 18 in independent form to place those claims in condition for allowance. Thus, these claim amendments place all of the pending claims in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, the Examiner kindly provided guidelines illustrating the preferred layout for the specification of a utility application. Applicant, however, has not amended the specification to conform it to the preferred layout because the layout of the present specification is in full compliance with the applicable U.S. rules of practice. Applicant notes that the guidelines provided by the Examiner are merely suggestions for use by applicants and that there is no specific rule requiring applications to adhere to the preferred layout. Therefore, if an objection to the specification were intended by the Examiner, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of that objection at least for the reasons stated above.

Claims 1-5, 12-14, 21-26, 33, 35-38, 40-58, and 129-132 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,640,957 to Kaminski et al.

("Kaminski"). In addition, claims 27-32, 34, and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C.

§ 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaminski in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,492,326 to Robinson et al. Without necessarily agreeing with these rejections, Applicant notes that these rejections should no longer apply because all of the rejected claims now recite allowable subject matter.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application, withdrawal of all of the outstanding rejections, and timely allowance of all of the pending claims.

The Office Action contains a number of statements and characterizations regarding the claims and the related art. Applicant declines to subscribe automatically to any statement or characterization in the Office Action, regardless of whether it is addressed above.

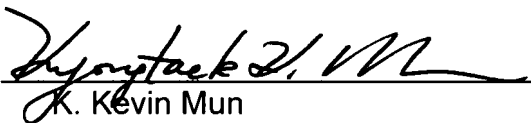
The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned (571-203-2739) if a telephone conversation might advance prosecution of the application.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

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By: 
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